

*For Immediate Release:*

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## **CONGRESS APPROVES \$500K FOR HERRING RUN RESTORATION**

### **Buttresses Local Initiative to Revive Wildlife Habitat**

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Bill Delahunt, along with Senators Edward M. Kennedy and John F. Kerry, today announced an infusion of federal support for the largest wetland restoration project in the Commonwealth's history.

The Senators and Congressman have secured \$500,000 to support Wellfleet's efforts to acquire land adjacent to the Herring River -- a critical first step to revive the deteriorating 1000-acre estuary for recreation, wildlife and commercial fishermen. Over the last century, a decaying dike has constricted the opening used for ocean tides to replenish the habitat's ecosystem with salt water. The estuary no longer supports once-thriving waterfowl and fish populations - including herring, the river's namesake. Invasive plant species have also encroached on essential fauna, such as salt marsh hay and black grass.

When the dike is fully rebuilt, the improved tidal flow will flood several acres of neighboring land. This will create new salt marsh habitat and accelerate the replenishment of a number of indigenous species, such as the diamondback terrapin and the sharp-tailed sparrow.

"This is a political victory with potentially spectacular natural consequences," Delahunt said. "So often these days, we're forced to defend against assaults on the environment. It is gratifying to bring home some affirmatively good news about joint stewardship of public lands."

"Preserving the Cape's natural beauty for generations to come is critically important, and the Herring River restoration is one of the boldest preservation projects yet," Senator Kennedy said. "I'm grateful that we've been able to play a small role in this extraordinary partnership."

Senator Kerry said, "We must do everything possible to preserve the beautiful natural resources around Cape Cod. This funding will help preserve 27 acres of coastal wetland

habitat in Wellfleet along the Herring River - - a critical component of the largest wetland restoration project in Massachusetts' history. I enjoyed working with Senator Kennedy and Congressman Delahunt to secure this important funding."

"This will be the largest salt marsh restoration project ever undertaken in New England and will restore the health and vitality of Cape Cod's coastal wetlands and Cape Cod Bay itself" said Wayne Klockner, state director of The Nature Conservancy, which has been a leading advocate for the restoration project. "We are grateful to Senators Kennedy and Kerry and Congressman Delahunt for their strong commitment to this important effort."

The federal funds were included as part of the fiscal year 2006 Energy and Water Appropriations Act. The legislation received final House and Senate approval yesterday. Earlier this year, the town committed \$1.2 million to the Herring Run restoration project.